

they may have been, the Lollards were not able to make the least show of rebellion.¹

During the next quarter of a century more trials took place, at least two of which resulted in burning, but we have no record of any more attacks on whole congregations at once. The Lollards as a sect were probably going down in numbers, and were certainly in most places forced to act with greater secrecy under the pressure of such terrible laws, although it may well be that in some few districts besides Langport, the dependents of one or other of the Lords of the Roses defied Church authority. An important light is thrown upon the state of religious parties at this time, by the story of Reginald Pecock, Bishop of Chichester, which although it concerns only the fate of an isolated and friendless individual, has deservedly taken a place in the history of England.

More than one large volume of theology written to confute Wycliffism has survived to our own day. The chief work of Henry the Fifth's time, written by Thomas Waldensis,² is of interest only because it shows on what points Lollardry was repugnant to the orthodox of that generation; but the arguments used by Reginald Pecock, writing to confute the same heresies about the year 1450, are in themselves worthy of consideration. In his book, called 'The Represser of Overmuch blaming of the Clergy,' he so far adopted Wycliffe's methods as to write, not in the learned Latin and for the clergy alone, but in English, to appeal to the reason of laymen. He assumes throughout his book that there exists a frankly outspoken prejudice against the Church and against her doctrines. Such phrases as this occur; 'Full oft have I heard men and women unwisely judge and defame full sharply well nigh all Christian men to be idolaters, and all for the having and vicing of images.' To describe his opponents Pecock uses such words as the 'lay party/ * some of the lay people/ or * many of the lay party/ His language implies that he was not speaking merely of a small sect despised and rejected of men, but of an attitude of mind which a clergyman might expect to find prevailing to a greater or less degree

¹ Karasay, i. 436-7; Privy Council, Nicolas, 89, 99, 107; Gregory's *Chronicle*, Camden Society, 1876, new series, xvii. 17 i», * Waldensis, •<!. 1523.